

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

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R 161645Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4833

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

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3.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, EIS

SUBJ: NI POLICE REFORM

1. SUBJECT OF NI POLICE REFORM HAS RECENTLY BEEN PROMINENT IN NEWS, WITH SOME DUBLIN JOURNALISTS SUGGESTING THAT THIS IS MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM AREA WHICH WAS NOT CONFRONTED IN BRITISH WHITE PAPER. (PAPER DOES, HOWEVER, RECOGNIZE NEED OF "DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION" IN RESTORING "NORMAL POLICE SERVICE.")

2. ON JULY 12, SEVERAL SDLP LEADERS VISITED DUBLIN FOR TALKS WITH PM COSGRAVE AND OPPOSITION LEADER LYNCH. IN PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER MEETINGS, JOHN HUME STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF POLICE REFORM. HE SAID THAT ACTION WAS REQUIRED ON THREE FRONTS IN NI: POWER-SHARING IN ASSEMBLY, ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE COUNCIL OF IRELAND TO MEET THE "IRISH DIMENSION," AND FULL REFORM OF POLICE AND SECURITY. HUME AND AUSTIN CURRIE BOTH SAID THAT POWER-SHARING IN NEW NI ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE WOULD BE USELESS UNLESS SECURITY AND POLICE SYSTEM WERE MADE ACCEPTABLE TO WHOLE COMMUNITY. SPEAKERS

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NOTED THAT CATHOLICS HAD NEVER ACCEPTED RUC AS THEIR

POLICE FORCE. (WHILE THIS IS A TRUISM, IMPORTANCE
ASSIGNED TO POLICE REFORM BY SDLP SPEAKERS WAS SIGNIFICANT).

3. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH US, GOI CONTACTS HAVE LONG
LISTED RUC REFORM AS ONE OF NI NECESSITIES. WE HAD NOT
BEEN AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH HIGH PRIORITY WAS ASSIGNED
TO PROBLEM. WHEN WE CALLED SOURCE CLAOSE TO FONMIN FOR
COMMENT ON SDLP STATEMENTS, HE SAID THAT GOI SUPPORTED
THRUST OF WHAT HUME AND CURRIE WERE SAYING. EVERYONE
KNOWS, SOURCE SAID, THAT IN LARGE AREAS OF NI THERE IS
NOW NO POLICING AT ALL. FURTHER, RUC AS NOW CONSTITUTED
WILL NEVER BE ACCEPTED IN CATHOLIC AREAS. GOI HAS
DISCUSSED THIS PROBLEM WITH BRITISH, AS HAS SDLP, AND
BRITISH HAVE ENTIRELY UNDERSTOOD NEED FOR REFORM. ONLY
GOI FEAR NOW IS THAT LONDON MAY NOT BE WILLING TO MOVE
PROMPTLY ENOUGH. ON OTHER HAND, SOURCE RECOGNIZED THAT
SUBJECT IS DELICATE, AS UNIONISTS LOOK ON RUC AS ONE
OF HARDY OLD INSTITUTIONS THAT SYNBOYZE THEIR WAY OF
LIFE. ANY MOVE TOWARD POLICE REFORM WILL UPSET PUBLIC
OPINION IN PROTESTANT COMMUNITY.

4. JOURNALISTS HAVE SOMETIMES SUGGESTED THAT THERE CAN
BE NO REAL SOLUTION TO SECURITY PROBLEMS ON THIS ISLAND
UNTIL AN ALL-IRELAND ENFORCEMENT AREA IS FORMED. THIS
SEEMS A VALID POINT TO US. IT HAS BEEN CATUIOUSLY
RECOGNIZED BY FAULKNER IN NORTH. WHILE SUBJECT IS
SENSITIVE HERE, WE BELIEVE GOI WOULD BE HAPPY TO WORK
WITH RECONSTITUTED NI ASSEMBLY TOWARD ALL-IRELAND
SECURITY. GOI MIGHT PREFER COORDINATE THROUGH A
COUNCIL OF IRELAND, WHICH WOULD THEREBY ASSUME A VERY
IMPORTANT ROLE. IN ANY EVENT, HOWEVER, FULL-SCALE
COOPERATION WOULD CLEARLY DEPEND UPON EXISTENCE OF AN
NI POLICE FORCE ACCEPTABLE TO CATHOLIC AS WELL AS
PROTESTANT COMMUNITIES. SORENSON

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